



Guidelines to the educational sector for Post-Secondary Schools/Institutions and Tertiary Institutions in Malta and Gozo

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Preamble

These guidelines are applicable for all Post-Secondary and Tertiary Institutions excluding Schools and Institutions of Performing Arts which have specific guidelines in place. This is applicable for the Scholastic year 2021/2022. These are referred to as 'Post-Secondary and Tertiary Institutions in this document. Each Post-Secondary/Tertiary Institute should adapt these guidelines according to the specific setup of the Institute itself and in line with other guidelines as issued from time to time by the Public Health authorities.

These guidelines are meant to mitigate, as much as possible, against the transmission of COVID-19. Although the risk of infection is reduced, it can never be completely eliminated. Policy makers, the educational sector, parents/guardians and students need to understand that a risk of transmission will still exist even if these guidelines are rigorously followed and implemented however the risk is reduced.



General Information on COVID-19

The virus which causes COVID-19 disease is mainly spread through droplets from a sick person and can also be spread through contact (by touch). Viral particles may also remain suspended in the air (aerosols). COVID-19 disease often presents with coughing or sneezing which release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets can fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, machinery, equipment, floors, walls, clothes, or telephones. People can catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth, but the risk of acquiring COVID from contaminated objects is considered to be low.

Symptomatology

The symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle aches or pains, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nasal congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting or diarrhoea. Symptoms generally occur between 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. COVID-19 symptoms and clinical manifestations in adolescents are similar to that of adults. Adolescents are unlikely to suffer from severe manifestations of the infection and are rarely hospitalised or die from COVID-19. Those with pre-existing comorbidities are at an increased risk.

Closure of Post-Secondary/Tertiary Institutes as a last resort

Evidence has shown that in the run up of the third scholastic year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst non-pharmaceutical interventions such as rigorous physical distancing and even closure of schools/ post-secondary institutions have been effective and justified at the outset of the pandemic, now the overwhelming priority is to enable the physical presence of children and adolescents in school whilst protecting the health of student and the community. Experience and monitoring of viral spread in educational settings has shown that this mirrors the epidemiology in the community and that with adequate mitigation



measures at a community level together with timely public health intervention through early identification of cases and quarantine of close contacts, outbreaks in such settings can be contained.

The educational losses, social disruption and distress need to be considered along alongside the physical distancing measures in the delicate risk-benefit balance which aims to keep the student population free from COVID-19 whilst allowing as much as possible the resumption of the usual activities in their educational setting. Additional efforts are required to consider those who were already disadvantaged and socially vulnerable such as those with additional learning needs who unfortunately have been most impacted by the educational closures and disruptions. The temporary closure of post-secondary/tertiary institutions should be considered a measure of last resort in an aim to curb uncontrolled viral spread because otherwise the losses incurred through schools' closure are too great. This policy position is in line with that of WHO, OECD and UNICEF. This guidance has been developed in the context of the current available evidence and contextualised to the current epidemiological situation. This remains subject to review once evidence and contexts change.

The mixing of households which will result from physical re-opening must be viewed in the wider context of the public health mitigation measures which are currently adopted in the wider community setting. These guidelines apply to all Post-Secondary schools/Institutions in Malta and Gozo.



Epidemiological Considerations

In considering the new scholastic year, the following epidemiological factors need to be considered:

Vaccination rate

Overall, more than 95% of those eligible for vaccination in Malta have been fully vaccinated with a full course of an EMA approved vaccine and this translates to over 80% of the total population. In light of the efficacy of the vaccine in preventing severe illness, hospitalisation and death, all those eligible for this vaccine should have already taken this or they should seek to be vaccinated as soon as possible.

The prevailing local epidemiological situation

The level of community transmission at any point in time will provide an indication of the risk of spread of COVID-19 positive cases within an educational community. This is evaluated in several ways. Epidemiological factors such as the proportion of PCR and rapid antigen testing per capita and the positivity rate are also taken into consideration. A 7-to-14-day incidence rate is also calculated as well as the % of epi-linked clusters amongst the positive cases. The greater the transmission rate, the greater the probability of encountering a positive case within an educational environment since the community and schools/ post-secondary/ tertiary settings are closely interlinked as the level of risk in one reflects the level of risk in the other.

There is a possibility that in view of infrastructural differences, the degree and level of effective mitigation can be different between one institution and another. Mitigation measures can be scaled up and down according to the level of community spread and also in the eventuality of an outbreak within a particular setting.



Updated evidence surrounding COVID-19 transmission and that Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPI) applied in schools are synergistically effective in limiting the viral transmission in school settings¹. In Malta 4.35% of COVID-19 positive cases² were aged between 16-18 years of age. Younger persons often have mild or asymptomatic illness meaning that an infection can go undetected or undiagnosed since they are less likely to be tested. When infected, however, transmission patterns amongst adolescents follow those of young adults and not of younger children.

Thus, a consideration of the national context and current level of community spread is paramount.

¹ ECDC. (2021). *COVID-19 in children and the role of school settings in transmission-second update*.

² Period covering 1st June-12th August 2021



Principles for risk mitigation

Vaccination

Highly Effective at decreasing serious illness, hospitalisation and death

Physical distancing

Staggered timings in/out
Staggered breaks
Distances between persons

Ventilation

Outdoor activity is preferred to indoors
Adequate ventilation in classrooms

Cohorting

Keep group of students/educators constant where possible throughout the day inc. breaks

Masks

Effective means of source control

Enhanced Hygiene

Hand hygiene/Respiratory hygiene
Do not attend school if unwell
Cleaning/Disinfection of premises

Public Health Action

Timely testing of symptomatic persons
Schools Contact Tracing Team
+COVID 19 Liaison Officers in School



The mitigation factors which can be introduced within the Post-Secondary/Tertiary Institutions

Vaccination

All those students and staff who have been offered a COVID-19 vaccine and have not yet taken this vaccine are encouraged to accept this offer including the additional booster dose if applicable. Persons who are fully vaccinated are shown to be much less likely to develop severe illness, hospitalisation or die from COVID-19 infection. Although infection in vaccinated persons particularly with the more transmissible delta variant is still possible (though to a lesser degree than those unvaccinated), vaccination together with all the other mitigation measures is critically important to prevent spread of viral illness. It is important for all parents to be encouraged to take a full course of an effective COVID-19 vaccine and the booster dose when offered, since this offers protection to them directly, their immediate family and also the community at large.

Individual Hygiene Recommendations

- ✓ Students should monitor for any signs of illness in the morning before attending post-secondary/tertiary institution. Persons who are unwell (students/staff) should not attend post-secondary/tertiary institution. Refer to flow chart in Annex A.
- ✓ Temperature screening of students/staff may be carried out at the entrance. A screening temperature $>37.2^{\circ}$ C or anybody who appears unwell should not be admitted.
- ✓ Hand hygiene is paramount to decrease spread of the virus. This can be achieved by frequent washing with soap and water using correct techniques³ or through the use of sanitisers placed at critical points in the facility.

³ <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Advice%20on%20handwashing%20and%20the%20use%20of%20gloves.pdf>



- ✓ Avoid touching one's face (including one's mask) particularly the eyes, nose and mouth.
- ✓ Sneezing/ coughing should be into a tissue or the crook of one's elbow ensuring appropriate disposal of the soiled tissues and cleaning of hands afterwards.
- ✓ Unnecessary contact between staff and students and amongst the students themselves should be avoided eg. Hugging, shaking hands etc.
- ✓ Avoid touching frequently-touched surfaces, such as lift buttons, railings etc. Ensuring rigorous hand hygiene afterwards
- ✓ Water fountains where 'no contact' is required for filling of one's flask/cup are permitted ensuring adequate hand hygiene before and after.

Personal belongings

- ✓ Personal sanitising products should be brought daily by the student

Enhanced hygiene practices in the premises

- ✓ Premises and resources are to be cleaned daily using approved products. For further details regarding the methods and agents recommended kindly refer to **Annex B**.
- ✓ Premises are to be cleaned thoroughly between one cluster of students and another. Common functional rooms and common resources used by different groups of students need to be cleaned appropriately at regular intervals and at the beginning and the end of each day e.g. laboratories
- ✓ Unauthorised personnel are not allowed in the post-secondary/tertiary institution. **No parents or guardians are allowed in the Institution except in cases of emergency or unless they are attending an 'Event' as detailed below.**
- ✓ Toilets must be cleaned regularly, at least three times a day with a log of the cleaning time kept. Hand blowers should not be used. Paper towels are recommended for appropriate hand hygiene.



- ✓ Students in the same classroom and/or bubble should be encouraged to wipe down their desks and equipment before and after use.
- ✓ Special considerations using the correct cleaning agents or use of protective covers over hardware and equipment in computer labs.
- ✓ The risk of infection by touching an item which was previously touched by a person infected with COVID-19 is considered to be extremely small. The CDC⁴ quantifies this risk as less than 1 in 10,000. An emphasis on hand hygiene when handling books or papers touched by others is sufficient.
- ✓ Floor cleaning should be carried out more regularly and frequently throughout the day, and as necessary and as required in the case of spillages.
- ✓ If the premises have been closed for a number of months please refer to Annex C which details environmental control measures which need to be taken in the Water Systems prior to reopening. (Annex C)
- ✓ Frequently touched spots such as door handles, light switches, handrails, tables should be cleaned with particular attention several times during the day.

Physical distancing

A number of measures working synergistically help to achieve physical distancing between individuals:

- ✓ Orderly entry into the classroom/ lecture room should be ensured maintaining an adequate physical distance and no crowding.
- ✓ Where possible, a physical distance of 2 metres should be maintained in common areas e.g. such as in reception areas and at toilet sink stations. If this is not possible, Perspex screens should be installed at a 2-metre height from the ground

⁴<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/science-and-research/surface-transmission.html#ref7>



- ✓ Ideally the common areas should be organized for there to be a one-way flow of staff and students.
- ✓ The institution should make maximum efforts for the students to remain in groups which are kept as small and as constant as possible.
- ✓ Where students are taught by different teachers, where possible, maximum efforts should be made for the students to remain in the classroom whilst the teachers move from class to class. Where this is not operationally feasible, the institution should minimise the need for students to roam from a classroom to another unless it is unavoidable. Timetables should be set in a way that minimises the mixing of bubbles and classrooms.
- ✓ Whereas maximum efforts should be made for in-person teaching, there may be situations where complementary online teaching may be necessary.
- ✓ Unauthorized personnel should not enter the post-secondary/tertiary institution. Only students, authorised personnel and Management are allowed. **No parents or guardians are to be allowed in the Institution at any time except in cases of emergency or in accordance with 'Events' section.**
- ✓ In order to minimise the non-essential contact between persons, any communication, including that between Students, Management, Staff should preferably take place by electronic means eg. via email or virtual meetings. This includes any progress reports which can be provided electronically.
- ✓ Collaborators and contractors who provide agreed services to the post-secondary/tertiary institution are to abide by these same guidelines when providing a service to the Institution.

In the Classroom/Lecture room/Workshops/Laboratories

- ✓ Where possible and appropriate, students and desks should all face in the same direction and none should be facing each other.



- ✓ It is very important that there is no unnecessary contact between students, or between students and staff members.
 - ✓ Staff members should avoid walking around the class unnecessarily.
 - ✓ Daily attendance of students should be taken for each classroom/group and capacity monitoring should be done through regular daily checks.
 - ✓ Teachers, lecturers and non-teaching staff must keep **2 metres** between themselves (between staff) and between staff and students.
 - ✓ Wherever it is the case of support provision, for Learning Support Educators to be able to provide the service required of them, they may need to work at close distance to the students they are supporting. However, the distance may vary as it depends on the needs of the individual student. It is recommended that the LSE wear both a mask and a visor
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- ❖ In view of the positive uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine in this age group, maximum efforts should be made to maintain a minimum physical distance of **1 metre** between students in all directions whilst sitting in their chair (except those positioned near a wall). The use of outdoor campus facilities for teaching is to be encouraged.
 - ❖ Teachers, lecturers and non-teaching staff must keep **2 metres** between themselves (between staff) and between staff and students.

Staff rooms

It is recommended that, if possible and necessary, staff attend the staff room at staggered times. They are to remove their mask only to eat/ drink. It is important that the cumulative time a staff member spends in the staff room in the presence of other persons is reduced to the barest minimum (ideally less than two hour per day), whilst always maintaining an adequate physical distance from others at all times. If a system of 'hot desking' is in operation, each person should be responsible to clean the surfaces and shared electronics with suitable agents before and after use. Meetings should be held virtually wherever



possible. Each educator needs to have documented which lessons were taught on a daily basis- including tutorials and time spent in staff room. If a staff member had to spend free time outdoors this is preferred to an indoor setting.

Ventilation

Outdoor lessons and activities are encouraged since this allows for additional ventilation and also better distancing between students. Any viral particles are easily diluted in the air as opposed to when one is within an enclosed space where cross-ventilation using open apertures and ventilation systems becomes more important for circulation of the air.

In indoor settings, regular and adequate ventilation is essential to reduce the level of possible pathogens in the air. Doors and/ or windows should be kept open throughout the day to allow for cross ventilation. To improve ventilation, efforts should be made to keep windows open during lessons and also, at regular intervals such as mid-way through lessons, in-between lessons and during breaks prop windows even further open to force greater circulation of the air. If the ambient temperature is uncomfortable for the students during the winter months, they should be encouraged to wear more layers of clothing. If air-conditioning is to be used, this should be used in accordance with the guidelines issued by Public Health authorities⁵. Filters should always be cleaned well and maintained properly.

Masks

- ✓ Masks are an effective means of source control. At post-secondary school/institute level (16+ students), it is recommended that students wear masks at all times, including in their class/ lecture room, besides in common areas and while on campus.
- ✓ Staff members are required to wear a face mask at all times when in the presence of others (both other staff/ students).

⁵ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Guidance_Air-conditioning-and-ventilation-systems_23Jun20.pdf



- ✓ The Standards for Masks⁶ allow for specific medical and behavioural conditions for which there are certified exceptions to mask use.
- ✓ As yet, there is no evidence that face shields are effective as source control or protection from respiratory droplets as masks thus, masks should be used and visors can only be used together with a face mask. However, in certain situations where an individual is exempt from mask-wearing, then a face shield or visor is preferable to nothing at all.

Considerations for Specific Activities

❖ Transport

The following recommendations should be considered whenever the Post-Secondary and Tertiary Institution organises transport for the students/staff:

1. Increase the frequency of transport services
2. Keep journeys as short as possible
3. Retaining the same cohort/cluster of students on every journey. This is essential to allow for proper contact tracing
4. Keeping accurate records of all students on each trip including their seating positions
5. Keep vehicles well ventilated, keeping windows open and no air recirculation
6. Maintain safe physical distancing between students to decrease the number of occupants in the vehicle
7. All students and staff are to wear masks at all times.
8. Availability of sanitizers in the vehicle
9. Proper cleaning of the vehicle between journeys

⁶ <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Use%20of%20Face%20Masks%20and%20Visors.pdf>



❖ Canteen Facilities/ Common rooms

These should operate in line with the Standards for Restaurants⁷ including the limitation of the number of persons per table, enhanced hygiene of the premises and record of attendances in the canteen. There should be no unnecessary movement between one seated group and another. All mitigation measures need to be maintained including physical distancing, masks and sanitisation.

❖ Gatherings

Small, essential and occasional gatherings comprising students and members of the post-secondary/tertiary institution may take place ensuring that the bubble concept is maintained. Non-essential gatherings should be avoided. They should take place preferably outdoors or else in large well-ventilated indoor areas. In view of differences in structural layouts, management should consider the following factors - outdoors is preferred to indoors and the size of the space available needs to be considered relative to the students one would like to accommodate.

The students in the gathering should be seated in small groups of a maximum of 6 persons, still maintaining an adequate interpersonal distance and at least 2.5 metres from other groups. These gatherings should not last longer than 30 minutes. Orderly entrance/exit from the gathering is expected in order to avoid mixing between students. Examples of such gatherings could include mass or assemblies for example. In the lecture room/classroom distancing needs to be according to the section on page 13, 14.

⁷ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Standards-for-Restaurants,-Pools,-Hotels,-Accommodation_28Jun21.pdf



❖ Events in Educational Settings during School Hours

Occasional events where persons outside of the school community eg. Parents/ guardians/ family members are invited to attend an event organized by the school authorities eg. School concert, Sports day or similar.

These events can be organized in accordance with the Public Health Guidance on Organised Safe Events⁸ which contains full details on the application for risk assessment and vaccine verification for any event.

Salient points:

1. Events must be capped at 300 persons (audience) maintaining a physical distance of 1 metre between different households.
2. Only vaccinated persons with a recognized vaccine certificate will be permitted to attend.
3. There should be a named event organizer who will be responsible for submission of a risk assessment⁹ and application for the Vaccine Verifier app¹⁰ as detailed in the [Conditions and guidance for safer organized events](#).
4. There is to be no mixing of audience and students at any point during the event.
5. Masks are to be worn by the audience at all times; masks or exceptionally visors are to be used by the performers.
6. Performers should ideally include a single class bubble or multiple bubbles which do not mix if the space and appropriate physical distancing allows this. One should consider a distance of 2 metres between performers.

⁸ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Organised%20Safe%20Events_1_11_21.pdf

⁹For risk assessment of event, complete form- https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfs6pxdyjcA_zTY-P1MhVg9DBmXE7TnSRnVhkgDwgqK62bK0w/viewform

This form needs to be submitted to riskdepository@visitmalta.com

¹⁰ Application for vaccine verifier app: iccertifikavaccin@gov.mt



❖ Sports Activities

It is important that students continue to partake in sports activities both during formal physical education lessons and also any other activities which may be organised. All sports/games activities carried out during educational hours are to be guided by the guidelines regulating sports activities. The use of gymnasiums is also permissible and relevant guidelines should be followed¹¹. It is preferred that students **engage in games and/or activities within the same group since mixing between various different participants increases the risk of one being quarantined if a positive case were to result among those involved in the activity**. Masks should be worn before and after sports activity with adequate hand hygiene before and after handling one's mask.

When students are going to be using shared resources, these should be sanitised between each successive group of students. Equipment which cannot be cleaned/disinfected should not be used.

❖ Music Lessons/Drama

Singing, music lessons involving wind instrument lessons and drama may present additional risks in view of the potential of aerosol generation. Additional measures should be adopted during these lessons such as preferably holding these lessons outdoors, increasing the physical distances between students.

¹¹ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Obligatory_Conditions_And_Guidelines_For_Gymnasiums_And_Fitness_Centres.pdf



❖ Emergency Procedures/ Fire Drills

Any occasional essential activity which is necessary to take place for the health and safety of the students and staff should resume keeping in mind the principles of physical distancing, clustering of students, use of masks and hand hygiene.

Public Health Action

The following measures comprise a set of Public Health policy decisions which are aimed at prioritising the early identification and management of COVID-19 cases in post-secondary/tertiary institution with an aim to rapidly mitigate any outbreaks of infection which may result and minimise the disruption of teaching and learning.

A) Testing

Any person (student/staff) who has symptoms of COVID-19 should book a COVID-19 test <https://www.covidtest.gov.mt> or by calling 111. Medical Doctors have been provided with guidance on when to recommend a COVID-19 test for children with symptoms. The most reliable test currently available is the Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction test (RT-PCR test) for SARS-CoV-2 the virus which causes COVID-19.

Besides the RT-PCR test, Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) are now also available on the market and also provided within the public service by certified RAT providers¹². The available RAT tests are also applied by obtaining a nasopharyngeal swab test. Standards on the use of RATs¹³ have been published and should be followed. Contact tracing within the post-secondary/tertiary institution will begin in those circumstances where a RAT test is considered confirmatory and/or in those instances where public health deems action is necessary.

¹² <https://legislation.mt/eli/ln/2021/49/eng/pdf>

¹³ <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Pages/rapid-antigen-testing.aspx>.



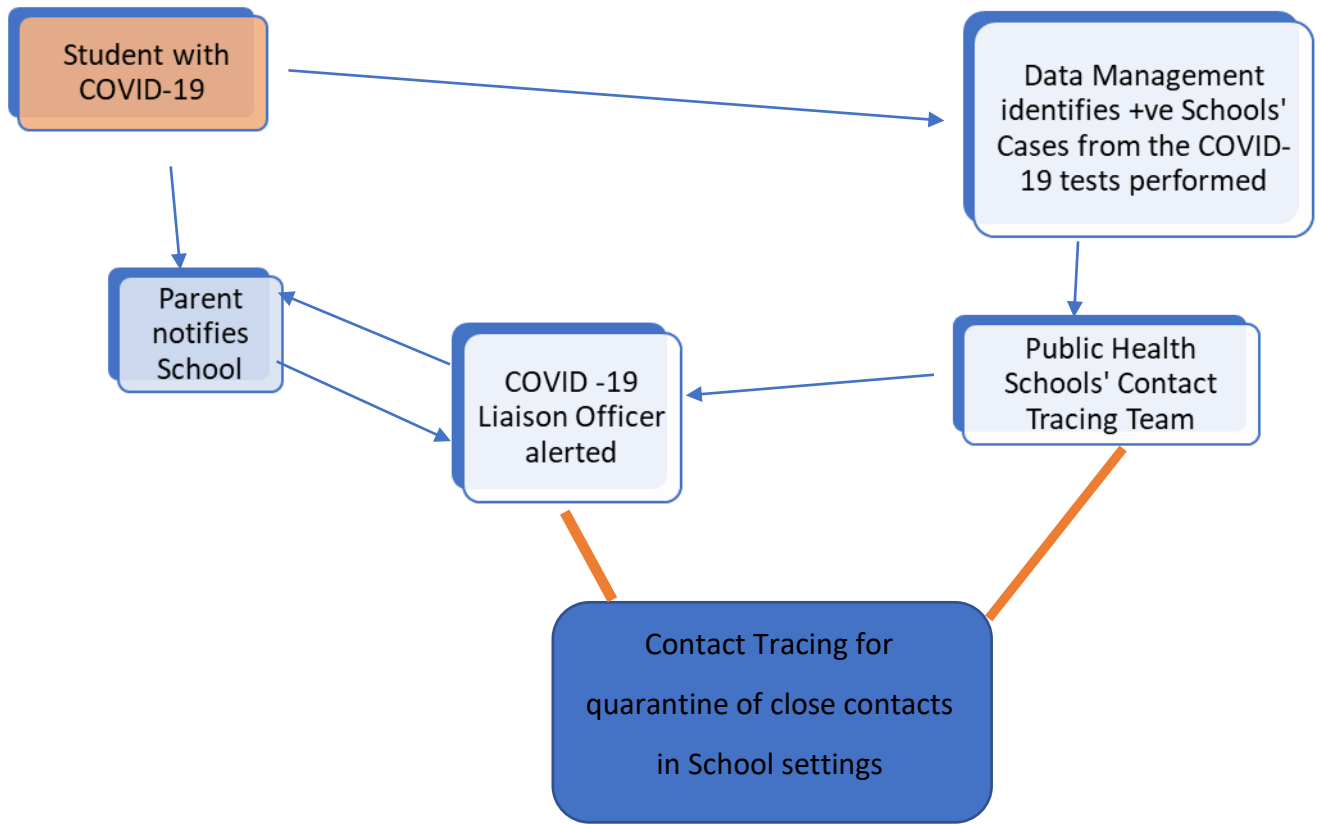
In the instance where one is an asymptomatic close contact of a confirmed case, one may wish to be tested for COVID-19. The timing of such a test should be at least 2 days after the last exposure to the positive case. If exposure has taken place 8 or more days previously then an RT-PCR test is indicated. If at any point a person who may have been exposed to COVID-19 exhibits symptoms, then a COVID-19 test should be booked without delay.

B) Schools' Contact Tracing Team/ COVID-19 Liaison Officers in post-secondary/tertiary institution

A joint team between Health and Education Ministries has been established during the Pandemic with set policies and procedures to rapidly identify and take public health action within post-secondary/tertiary institutions the event of a positive case of COVID-19.

Concerted action of Post-Secondary/ Tertiary Institute Management to keep accurate records of all students as regards attendance, seating plans and contact details are imperative to the speed at which contact tracing can take place.

Each post-secondary/tertiary institution needs to have COVID-19 Liaison Officer/s whose details need to be communicated to public health authorities. The roles and responsibilities of the COVID-19 Liaison Officer can be found in Annex C. The process by which a positive case is notified and contact tracing takes place is outlined in the figure below.



Contact Tracing protocols for persons (students/educators) who are identified as being in close contact of a positive case of COVID-19 are based upon an individualised risk assessment carried out by the post-secondary/tertiary institution' Contact Tracing Team in accordance with specified protocols which are based on the ECDC criteria of exposure to COVID-19¹⁴. Public Health action may be taken in specific settings based upon the risk assessment carried out.

¹⁴ ECDC. (2021, July). *COVID-19 in children and the role of school settings in transmission-second update*. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/children-and-school-settings-covid-19-transmission>



High-risk contacts or primary contacts who are quarantined and are also fully vaccinated would be able to be released from quarantine 'early' in accordance with the [Public Health Standards for Quarantine of Primary Contacts](#)¹⁵.

Shielding (Staff and Students)

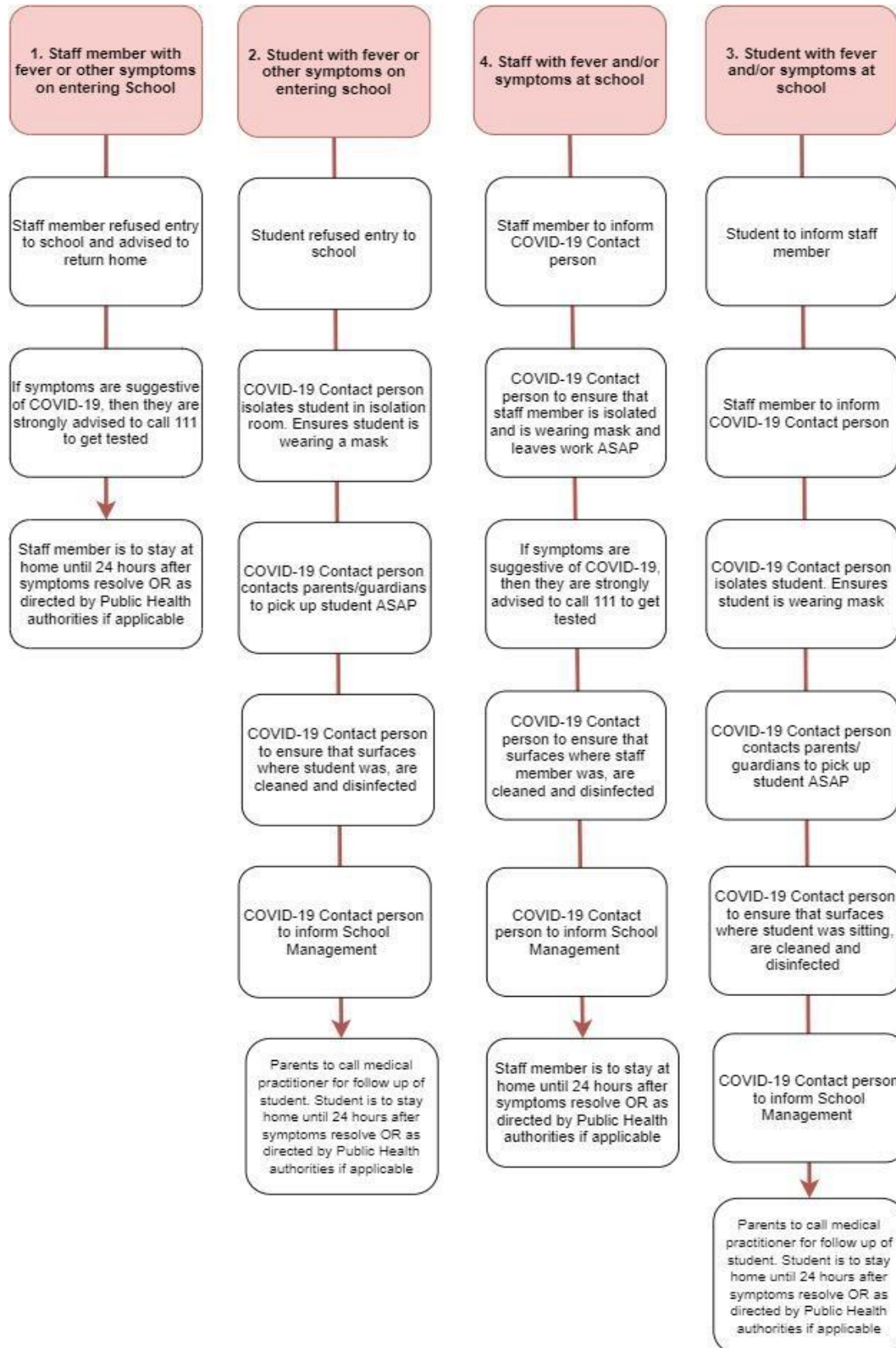
The Legal Notice LN 111 of 2020 Protection of the Vulnerable was repealed on the 5th June 2020 and clinically vulnerable people are no longer required to stay at home. The principal measure to combat COVID-19 infection is ensuring that at the first available opportunity one takes the full course of an EMA approved COVID-19 vaccine which would have been made available to all students and staff in this setting. The vaccination roll out in Malta was such that medically vulnerable persons were prioritized for vaccination. Moreover, it has been announced that immunocompromised persons would be offered an additional dose of a COVID-19 vaccine starting in September 2021. In light of the above measures, there is no specific group of persons who warrant blanket shielding.

¹⁵

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/Standards%20for%20quarantine%20of%20vaccinated%20primary%20contacts.pdf>



Annex A: Sickness procedure





Annex B: Cleaning

- ✓ In general, the infectivity of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces (such as wood, metal, fabrics and plastic) decreases depending on the material and environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity and UV radiation. The cleaning of surfaces remains an important measure to ensure hygienic conditions.
- ✓ Premises and resources are to be cleaned daily using approved products. A combination of cleaning with soap and water and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID-19 virus. Both cleaning and disinfection is most effective, using a combination of household detergents and disinfectants. A detergent is designed to break up oil and grease with the use of water. Anything labelled as a detergent will work. Cleaning should start with the cleanest surface first, progressively moving towards the dirtiest surface. Change water regularly. When surfaces are cleaned, they should be left as dry as possible to reduce the risk of slips and falls, as well as spreading of viruses and bacteria through droplets. Disinfecting means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. It is important to clean before disinfecting because dirt and grime can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs. Disinfectants containing $\geq 70\%$ alcohol, ammonium compounds, chlorine bleach or oxygen bleach are suitable for use on hard surfaces (surfaces where liquids pool, and do not soak in). The packaging or manufacturer's instructions will outline the correct way to use disinfectant. Disinfectants require time to be effective at killing viruses. If no time is specified, the disinfectant should be left for ten minutes before removing.

Premises need to be cleaned thoroughly between one group/cluster of students and another.

- ✓ It is recommended that where possible soft flooring should be wiped down by detergents and washed properly at the end of each day.
- ✓ Attention to use approved products which are suitable for children <3years of age according to one's educational setting.



- ✓ Toilets must be cleaned regularly, at least three times a day. Toilet seats, fittings, wash basins and floors must be cleaned. In case of contamination with faeces, blood or vomit, disinfectant wipes should be used after removal of the contamination with a disposable cloth soaked in disinfectant.
- ✓ Protective gloves and mouth and nose protection must be worn by members of staff.
- ✓ A log detailing the time when the toilet facility has been cleaned and by whom should be filled in for each toilet facility. The use of disposable towelling in toilets is encouraged.
- ✓ The following areas should be cleaned particularly thoroughly and, if possible, several times a day in heavily frequented areas:
 - Door handles and any other handles on drawers, windows, etc.
 - Stairs and handrails,
 - Light switches,
 - Tables, phones,
 - and all other grip areas.

Guidance related to the cleaning measures to be undertaken after having one of more confirmed COVID-19 cases within the premises can be found on the public health website

16.

¹⁶ <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Cleaning%20and%20disinfection%20of%20non-hospital%20settings%20after%20confirmed%20COVID-19%20positive%20case.pdf>



Annex C: Technical Note re: Water Systems in Establishments

Note: This annex applies only to those post-secondary/tertiary institution which form an integral part of a larger complex or building, which larger complex or building has not been in use for more than 4 weeks.

The following are the legal requirements to be carried out on the water systems prior re-opening of the premises:

1. Carry out a full system disinfection of the cold-water system, flushing through to all outlets to achieve 50 mg/l free chlorine for at least an hour checking that this level is achieved at the furthest outlets. This may be also achieved by making uses e.g. 5 mg/l for 10 hours (this all depends on the water piping system condition). It is important to top up when required throughout this process;
2. Flush out and refill the system to achieve maximum normal operating target levels of disinfection (equivalent to at least 0.2 mg/l free chlorine);
3. Refill and carry out a thermal shock by raising the temperature of the whole of the contents of the hot water storage heater from 70°C to 80°C then circulating this water throughout the system for up to three days. To be effective, the capacity and temperature of the hot water storage heater should be sufficient to ensure that the temperatures at the taps and appliances do not fall below 65°C. Each tap and appliance should be run sequentially for at least five minutes at the full temperature, taking appropriate precautions to minimise the risk of scalding;



4. Monitor temperatures and biocide levels where applicable, adjust where necessary, for at least 48-72 hours and then take Legionella samples from sentinel outlets (microbiological samples taken before 48 hours following disinfection may give false negative results);

5. Ensure you keep all documentation for inspection by the Competent Authority, including the review and update of the risk assessment manual including monitoring data, etc., with evidence of who carried out the monitoring, add time, date and signature;

6. Laboratory results for Legionella analysis which have to be carried out at an accredited laboratory, together with all the necessary documentation referred to in point 5 above and a declaration from the private water consultant under whom this water system treatment has been carried out are to be sent to the Water Regulatory and Auditing Unit within the Environmental Health Directorate prior reopening of the establishment;

7. Once it is found that your systems of the hot and cold water are under control then the establishment can reopen.



Annex D: COVID-19 Liaison Officer in each Institution

One or more COVID-19 Contact Person should be designated in each Institution. The Ministry for Education, the Independent Schools Association and the Church Schools will collect a list of these persons and their contact details for their respective schools for onward transmission to the Public Health authorities.

The role of this COVID-19 Contact Person would be to:

- ✓ Familiarise oneself with this guidance document and ensure this is implemented within the Institution.
- ✓ Organise the training of staff in COVID related mitigation measures
- ✓ Act as a contact point for staff, students and parents who may have queries with respect to the COVID mitigation measures implemented within the School;
- ✓ Ensure that when students are unwell, they are appropriately isolated as per mitigation plan and arrangements are made for collection by parent/guardian;
- ✓ In conjunction with the Education and Public Health authorities, collaborate on the development of an 'Early Warning System' which aims to look at trends in sick leave amongst staff and absenteeism amongst students to be able to predict or detect potential clusters of cases
- ✓ Serve as the designated person for liaison with Public Health authorities ensuring that one has access to the attendance records of the students, staff and contact details as required in the event of a positive case within the post-secondary/tertiary institution.

The post-secondary/tertiary institution is to hold accurate and timely records (time-in and time-out) of attendances and composition of groups of children and staff attending all times to provide, on request, the Public Health Authorities with any information related to the operations of the post-secondary/tertiary institution, including personal details of the staff,



parents/guardians and students attending the post-secondary/tertiary institution. The requirement for submission of any data to the Public Health authorities is in line with the Public Health Act.